

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9726

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: SOME REACTIONS TO SA ELECTION

REF: PRETORIA 1752

1. REFERRING TO NATIONAL PARTY (NP) VICTORY, IN POST-ELECTION STATEMENT PRIME MINISTER VORSTER SAID, "THIS WAS A CLEAR INDICATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL PARTY, ITS LEADERSHIP, ITS PARTY AND ITS PRINCIPLES." HE PREDICTED THAT A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION "IN THE RANKS OF THE OPPOSITION" WAS INEVITABLE, AND THAT LENGTH OF TIME LEADER OF OPPOSITION SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAFF WOULD RETAIN HIS POSITION IN UNITED PARTY (UP) WAS "PROBLEMATICAL."

2. GRAAFF ADMITTED UP HAD LOST GROUND TO PROGRESSIVES BUT SAID THAT THIS HAD HAPPENED BECAUSE "OF A CAMPAIGN BASED ON PERSONALITIES, NOT POLICIES, WHICH HAS CONFUSED THE ELECTORATE
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AND IT LENT CREDENCE TO NATIONALIST ATTEMPTS TO DENIGRATE

AND FRAGMENT THE OPPOSITION." GRAAFF ADDED THAT THIS WOULD "LEAD TO POLARIZATION OF VIEWS AND A DANGEROUS WEAKENING OF THE OPPOSITION UNLESS EARLY AND VIGOROUS STEPS ARE TAKEN TO CLARIFY THE REAL ISSUES."

3. CURIOUSLY IGNORING FACT THAT VOTER SUPPORT WHICH GAVE PROGS FIVE ADDITIONAL SEATS IN PARLIAMENT CAME LARGELY FROM DISAFFECTED SUPPORTERS OF UNITED PARTY, UP'S GENERAL SECRETARY BILL HORAK SAID ELECTION HAD SHOWN THAT STRONG ATTACKS BY PROGRESSIVES ON UNITED PARTY HAD DRIVEN MODERATE UP SUPPORTERS TO VOTE FOR NATIONALISTS.

4. UNTIL NOW, DEFEATED UP CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN NON-COMMITTAL. HOWEVER, VAUSE RAW, WHO REELECTED AS UP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DURBAN POINT, BITTERLY STATED: "THE PUBLIC HAS DONE WHAT IT WAS TOLD TO DO. IT HAS DESTROYED THE UNITED PARTY AND PUT THE NATIONALISTS IN FOREVER. WE WILL HAVE A ONE-PARTY STATE, THAT IS WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED." RAW ALSO SAID THAT ENGLISH PRESS HAD "GOT THE OPPOSITION IT WANTED AND THE GOVERNMENT IT DESERVES."

5. PRESS AND POLITICIANS CONTINUE TO SPECULATE ABOUT RESTRUCTURING OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO NATIONAL PARTY. MARAIS STEYN, NP MP, WHO UNTIL LAST YEAR WAS CONSIDERED SECOND ONLY TO GRAAFF IN UNITED PARTY HEIRARCHY, PREDICTED TO US TODAY THAT BREAKUP OF UNITED PARTY WILL OCCUR DURING NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.

6. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY MEN LIKE VORSTER AND STEYN HAVE VESTED INTEREST IN SEEING DISSOLUTION OF UNITED PARTY, WILL PROMOTE DISSENSION IN ITS RANKS AND WILL ENCOURAGE SOME UP CONSERVATIVE MP'S TO DEFECT TO NATIONAL PARTY. ALTHOUGH THEIR REMARKS CAN BE TAKEN WITH LARGE DOSE OF SALT, DISINTEGRATIVE FORCES WITHIN UP ARE STRONG. IN POST-ELECTION STATEMENT, NEW MP FOR RANDBURG, DICK ENTHOVEN, SAID, "THE PARTY IS PAYING ITS PRICE FOR THE PROBLEMS OF SCHLEBUSCH AND THE NOMINATIONS." SUCH REFERENCE TO CONTENTIOUS MATTERS WITHIN UP ARE BOUND TO RANKLE GRAAFF AND CONSERVATIVES, AND INDICATE THAT DIFFERENCES AMONG UP REFORMISTS AND CONSERVATIVES WILL NOT BE SWEEPED UNDER RUG. IN ADDITION, PREVIOUSLY WITH ONLY ONE MEMBER IN PARLIAMENT, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROGRESSIVE PARTY WAS UNABLE TO CALL FOR DIVISION OF HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON ISSUES THAT WERE BEING VOTED UPON BY HOUSE, THUS SPARING UP MEMBERS FROM COMMITTING THEMSELVES PUBLICLY. NOW, WITH SIX PROGS IN PARLIAMENT, PROGS CAN ASK FOR DIVISION ON ANY ISSUE BEFORE THE HOUSE, AND THEREBY FORCE EACH MP TO PUT HIS VOTE ON RECORD.

HURD

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